



MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN TASK FORCE

MEETING NOTES

FEBRUARY 10, 2004

4:00 P.M.

ROOM 113

Task Force Members Present	Kit Boesch, Nye Bond, Susan Dunn, Duane Eitel, Elaine Hammer, Rick Krueger, Marian Malone, Bill McCoy, Tad McDowell, Greg MacLean, Eric Miller, Patte Newman, Gordon Scholz. (Margaret Hall, Oscar Pohirieth, Terry Werner absent)
Resource Panel Members Present	Mike Brienzo, Doug Pillard, Sandy Strickland, Jerry Wray
Others Present	Gary Bergstrom, Mike Heyl, Brian Praeuner, Aaron Smith, Scott Tharnish, Alan Wickman, Kent Morgan, David Cary, Michele Abendroth

Agenda Topics

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Morgan called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Public Comment Period (10 min. maximum)

Alan Wickman encouraged the Task Force to review his memorandum which was distributed regarding his responses on the bicycling-related comments in the matrix. He noted that he feels it is very important to hire a City bicycle/pedestrian coordinator.

3. March 8th MMT Open House

Mr. Morgan reminded the Task Force of the Open House being held on March 8th from 4:30-6:00 p.m. with a presentation by SRF Consulting at 5:00 p.m.

4. Transit Service Characteristics Exercise

Mr. Morgan asked the Task Force to complete a survey on transit service characteristics which will be used to identify transit characteristics that are most important to the group. He asked them to complete it and return it to the Planning Department by February 18th. The results will then be tabulated and the presented to the Task Force at the next meeting.

5. Lincoln-Omaha Intercity Services

Mr. Eitel stated that the final report of the Nebraska Transit Corridors Study has been completed; he distributed a copy of the Executive Summary from that report. He noted that the original goal was to check the feasibility of commuter rail in the state of Nebraska. As they looked at the whole state, they narrowed it down to the Omaha, Lincoln, Blair and Norfolk corridors. One of the most important factors is where to get the money. In order to get federal funds, certain criteria must be met pertaining to the cost per new riders. The FTA is currently funding projects that cost \$25 per new rider or less; our costs were close to \$80 per new rider. Therefore, it appeared that we could not qualify for federal funds, which means that the state and local governments must fund the project.

Mr. Morgan introduced Chris Stokes of Omalink. Mr. Stokes began his PowerPoint presentation by providing a background of Omalink. He stated that he began the company on December 1st of last year. It is a shuttle service from Lincoln to Omaha. He started the company because he has experienced problems commuting from Lincoln and Omaha when flying. About 60-80% of Lincolniters fly out of Omaha. Roughly 10,000 people travel and commute from Lincoln to Omaha and Omaha to Lincoln on a daily basis. He concluded that if 1% of people cannot drive, that translates into 100 people per day he could possibly serve.

Mr. Stokes stated that his theme for the company is simplicity. Primarily they are an airport shuttle, as 95% of their customers are airline travelers. They have three late model 15-passenger vans and 12 employees. They depart every 2 hours from Lincoln and Omaha on the odd hours. Pick-up and drop-off locations are several destinations on the downtown loop, but they will pick up anywhere in the downtown area. A round-trip ticket is ;\$49.95; a one-way ticket is \$34.95. Companion discounts are also available.

Mr. Stokes noted the problems with Omalink are the insurance and advertising expenses. Also, changing peoples' habits can be difficult. There are governmental limits in that the Public Service Commission has stated that they cannot provide transportation between the Lincoln and Omaha airports, and they cannot provide point to point service in Lincoln.

In conclusion, Mr. Stokes stated they provide a low cost option for travel. He also believes they provide the City with the means for economic growth and development.

6. Staff Materials

Mr. Morgan briefly reviewed the handout entitled *Demographic Profile, Changes in Age Composition*. Mr. Cary then reviewed the results of the transit survey completed by the Task Force. He noted that one of the major themes was to improve the efficiency of the transit system and the maintenance and rehabilitation of the trail system. There was also support to establish a transit authority and to improve connectivity for pedestrians. For transit, the number one theme was to develop a downtown hub. For pedestrian and bicycle, the top three concepts were to maintain and improve the existing trail system through better maintenance, provide pedestrian connectivity, and implement a bike lane system. For land use and urban design, the idea that stood out the most was to use a transit oriented design. For administration/management, there was strong support for a transit authority. Mr. Cary then reviewed the handout entitled *The Role of Transit in Becoming the Community's Second Car*. The purpose of this handout was to provide costs for the ideas that we are talking about. In terms of revenue miles of service per

capita as compared to our peer cities, we would expect that Lincoln would need to increase service by a minimum of 35% to attain the average level of its peers. In order to attain the goal of 80% increased transit service to be more like Salem, Oregon as well as keep up with the population projections, we would need to purchase 70 new buses at a purchase cost of \$260,000 each and annual operational costs of \$110,000 each. Therefore, the operational budget for StarTran would increase to \$15.7 million per year. They also identified costs for a new bus garage, a downtown hub, and placing bike racks on the existing fleet. Mr. Cary then reviewed the costs associated with the improvements listed on the handout entitled *HOV/Bus lane, On and Off Street Bike Lanes, Sidewalks and Bus Turn Out*.

Mr. Morgan then drew the group's attention to the handout entitled *12 years stretched to 15 years*, which provided costs for road construction over the next 15 years.

7. Rick Krueger - Task Force Member

Mr. Krueger began his PowerPoint presentation by providing a history of transportation. He stated that the issue we are wrestling with is that some people choose space over density. He noted that the mean travel time to work for Lancaster County commuters who drive alone is 17.3 minutes as compared to 29.7 minutes for those commuters who use public transportation.

Mr. Krueger provided some suggestions. For trails, he suggested providing a dedicated income stream for the trail system, operate the trails as an enterprise fund, implement bicycle licensing fees, and consider using alleys as trails in selected areas. He also suggested allowing parking in the right-of-way. He believes that StarTran is operating in an outdated way. Some creative destruction must be applied in order for StarTran to be sustainable in the future. One suggestion is to reduce the geographic area that is covered. He is not saying that we shouldn't provide service to everyone, but possibly it could be provided in a different form. He believes it is very important to allow people to choose how they want to transport themselves.

Mr. Worth noted that the number of registered vehicles has gone up 21%, the number of parking garage stalls has gone up 120% in the last ten years, lane miles have gone up 46% in the last ten years. Ridership going down 4% shows that transit is "holding its own." Mr. Krueger stated that he would not like to get rid of StarTran, but would like to build upon the three or four best routes. Ms. Dunn asked about the demographics of the bus rider. Mr. Worth responded that the most riders are students, employees, and for medical reasons.

8. Roundtable Discussion

Mr. Hoskins asked the group to keep in mind the feasibility of the options and to have realistic expectations.

Mr. Worth stated that he believes the top eight or ten transit concepts identified by the group as being important are good ideas and are achievable.

Mr. Krueger asked Mr. Genrich his thoughts on running an enterprise fund for trails. Mr. Genrich stated that the challenge is how to establish the revenue source and the collection of the fees. The thing to remember is that a large portion of the funds for construction of trails comes from federal grants and private donations. He would hesitate to tax people in that manner. Mr.

Krueger questioned if the trail users should pay their fair share. Mike Heyl noted that cars create 74% of the pollution, so he believes that having the gas tax and then using that money to promote alternative transportation is a fair trade-off.

Mr. Krueger stated that for every mile we drive a bus, 1.1 persons gets on the bus.

Ms. Hammer stated that we need to consider the recreational trail user as well as the commuter.

Mr. Krueger stated that he views the trails as being used for discretionary trips.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Morgan adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

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